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## AN EARLY DESCRIPTION OF GEORGIA

From the Gentleman's Magazine, January,  
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## NEW GEORGIA

New Georgia is included in Carolina, and extends from latitude 30.30 to 32 N., between the river Savannah to the north, and that of Altamaha to the south.

This tract of country was also considered as part of South Carolina till the year of 1732, when several persons of distinction conceived a design of forming it into a separate establishment, with a view to procure a subsistence for the poor of Great Britain, and at the same time render them useful to their mother country.

The foundation of this undertaking was the charity of one person, who bequeathed a very considerable sum of money for the discharge of insolvent debtors, and appointed Mr. James Oglethorpe, then a member of parliament, and another gentleman, trustees for that purpose.

Mr. Oglethorpe was an active and enterprising man, and had distinguished himself as a friend to the unhappy wretches who were prisoners for debts which it was impossible they should pay, by many speeches in the house of commons in their favor; he was in every respect qualified for the charitable trust that was reposed in him, and the sum that he was to dispose of appeared to him so considerable, as that it might easily be made the ground work of a project that would render the relief at first intended much more extensive and important. He flattered himself that if the legacy, of which he had the disposition, increased by the charitable contributions of others, was applied to establish a colony in the most southern part of Carolina, which was then a desert, it would soon become very easy to take Florida from the Spaniards, and to give the French much disturbance in Louisana, if not to drive them out. His imagination immediately took fire from the

contemplation of this project, and he zealously seized the opportunity of making himself considerable, by rendering so important a service to his country.

As he did not want ability to recommend his project to others, he soon engaged in it several members of parliament who had an interest at court, and easily obtained the royal consent to found the intended colony; his majesty incorporated by charter those who had applied by petition, under the name of commissioners for the establishment of the colony of Georgia in America, and granted them his seven-eighths of this part of Carolina, the other being the property of Lord Carteret, with the pearl and all other fisheries, and all mines of gold, silver, and precious stones, reserving only a quit rent of 4s. for every hundred acres of land, the first payment to commence two years after they should bear value. Lord Carteret also complimented the commissioners with his right to one-eighth of this district.

A kind of general collection was made for this charity throughout the kingdom, and very considerable sums were contributed, to which the parliament added 10,000 sterling, and the commissioners were then able to purchase provisions and other necessities for the execution of their plan.

On the 6th of November, 1732, 100 adventurers embarked at Gravesend on board the *Anne*, a vessel of 200 tons burden; on the 15th Mr. Oglethorpe also embarked on board the same vessel to direct the first operations for establishing the new colony; and on the 15th of January they arrived at Carolina.

The succours which he received from the inhabitants of this Province greatly facilitated the execution of his design, and after having made an alliance with the savages, he laid the foundation of a city on the borders of the Savannah, and gave it the name of that river.

In the May following another vessel arrived at Georgia from England with many new settlers, and a considerable quantity of fresh provisions; fifty more families were soon

after sent over by the commissioners, so that the whole number that had landed in Georgia was about 500, of which 115 were foreigners. Besides this number which had been transported by the corporation, there were about 21 gentlemen and 116 servants, who went over at their own expense, so that during the first year 618 persons embarked for the new Province, of which about 320 were men, 113 women, 102 boys, and 83 girls.

In 1755 the colony was augmented by 105 Highlanders from Scotland, who settled on a spot which they called New Inverness, on the borders of the Altamaha. Mr. Oglethorpe, who had carried over the first settlers, and returned to England with Tomochichi, the chief of an Indian nation, with whom he had contracted an alliance, went this year back again to Georgia with 300 more settlers from Britain.

It is necessary in this place to take notice that Tomochichi, of whom great account was made at that time as the prince of a mighty nation, was in fact the chief of a warlike people, who have ever since preserved their allegiance to Great Britain, and who, upon the breaking out of the present contests with France, have given signal proofs of their unalterable fidelity, by a solemn renewal of their former contract.

The rash and impolitic zeal of the Bishop of Saltzborough, having driven the protestants out of his dominions, they were invited to make an asylum of our new Province; many families readily accepted the offer, and at length formed two cities, which they called Old and New Ebenezer.

In 1737 there were five cities and several villages in New Georgia, besides scattered habitations. Savannah, the capital, contained about 140 houses, besides magazines and cottages. The next considerable city was Augusta, the inhabitants of which applied themselves wholly to traffic with the savages; and this trade was so considerable, that in the year 1738 they sent 100,000 weight of raw hides to Savannah. In 1739 there were no less than 600 inhabitants who solely carried on this trade, besides many planters.

Georgia is divided into two parts, north and south. North Georgia contains three cities, Savannah, New Ebenezer and Augusta, and five villages, Old Ebenezer, Hampstead, Highgate, Abercorn and Skindwe. South Georgia contains two cities, Frederica and New Inverness, and one village, Barikmake. The Province is defended by 3 strong forts, Fort Argyle, Fort St. Andrew and Fort St. Augustine; but in 1741 it did not contain more than 1,000 souls.

This colony has by no means produced advantages equal to the great expense at which it has been established. The several sums granted by parliament before the year 1738, amounting to 66,000 l. sterl. and the sums collected in Great Britain, and in our American colonies were very great.

The soil is not of the most fertile kind, yet it produces rice, pitch, tar, hemp, flax, vegetable wax, and bees wax in considerable quantities.

The settlers also make pot-ash, and many vessels are freighted every year from Georgia with these commodities. They have firs of a great height, which make excellent masts, and are very fit for the builders, besides wood for dyeing and veneering in great plenty. Mulberry trees are also very common in this country, and it was hoped that silk worms might have been raised, and a silk manufacture established. With this view two or three Piedmontese were sent into Georgia, to instruct the settlers in this employment, and perfect silk was at length produced, but in so small a quantity that it deserved no attention. It is not indeed to be expected that the quantity of silk should be great as the colony was so thinly inhabited that hands were wanting to till the ground.

But the want of inhabitants was not less owing to the novelty of the establishment than to the bad constitution of the government, which resembled no other British establishment in the world. The people were absolutely excluded from all share in the government, which was placed wholly in a council of 24 commissioners, appointed by the king, who resided in

London, and nominated the magistrates who superintended the public affairs on the spot, and acted in consequence of instructions transmitted to them from hence.

These commissioners availed themselves of the power invested in them by the charter, of establishing fundamental laws, which totally subjected the colony to them, and in some degree rendered them absolute masters of the liberty and property of every individual in it. The only court of judicature was a kind of chancery, consisting of a very small number of these deputed magistrates, upon whom not only the fortune, but the lives of the people entirely depended; for as there is no appeal from the council, or the magistrates which the council deposes, the colony has no remedy but patiently to submit to any false measure which it may be required to pursue.

The discontent which such a form of government would naturally produce was greatly increased by the regulations established by the commissioners in their distribution of lands to the settlers. They divided the country into small parcels of 50 acres, and stipulated that only the male descendants of the tenant should inherit it, excluding daughters and every other degree of kindred; so that in default of heirs male, the lands were to revert back to the commissioners. The tenant was also restrained from selling, letting, or exchanging his lands, from employing negroes and taking more than one lot, which contributed to make them weary of their situation. Great numbers removed to South Carolina and other settlements; some came back to England, and, if their report is to be believed, the 1,000 which inhabited Georgia in 1741 were the remains of more than 5,000 which had been sent thither between that time and the year 1732.

Several alterations have been since made in these odious institutions. The lands now descend in the female line, and the tenant, if he has no heir, may devise them by will; but these alterations took place too late.

This colony, however, is thought of some consequence to the British interest, not so much for the value of what it may produce, as because it may serve as a southern frontier against any enterprise that may be formed by the French or Spaniards, if they should fortify themselves in Louisiana, as it is apparently their interest to do.

Great disputes have arisen between Georgia and Carolina, concerning the navigation of the river Savannah which separates the two colonies. The people of Carolina having made it the channel of a considerable trade with the Indians for skins and furs.

The charter by which Georgia was granted to commissioners as a separate colony extends it from the most northern boundary of the Savannah to the most southern limits of Altamaha, by which both rivers appear to belong to them, and they have seized several vessels of Carolina upon those rivers, and justify their conduct by the following reasons:

1. The Savannah is included in the grant of Georgia.
2. The vessels which have been seized were laden with rum, which in Georgia was a prohibited commodity.
3. They were fitted out for a traffic with the Indians, which belonged exclusively to the settlers in the new colony.

The people of Carolina have paid no regard to these reasons, but instead of discontinuing to navigate the Savannah, they have armed their vessels so as to be in no danger of an attack.